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MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release
Monday, September 22, 2003

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NEW YORK MAN GUILTY OF PASSPORT FRAUD

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced that BILLY SAMUEL JACKSON, 23, of Brooklyn, NY, pleaded guilty early today to committing passport fraud. JACKSON was indicted in U.S. District Court last May after agents of the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service uncovered the fraud at the National Passport Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

JACKSON, a Costa Rican national, pleaded guilty to willfully and knowingly making false statements to the State Department in a passport application in order to fraudulently obtain a United States passport. In May, 2001, JACKSON submitted a passport application in which he claimed that he was born in the United States Canal Zone. JACKSON also submitted a counterfeit U.S. Canal Zone birth certificate along with the false application.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated: "Passport fraud is a matter of grave concern. We will do everything possible to make sure that passports are not issued to persons who misrepresent their citizenship or falsify passport applications. Anyone who submits false information or fraudulently poses as a citizen to obtain a United States passport will be prosecuted."

This case resulted from an ongoing initiative known as "Operation Checkmate" which is designed to identify false passport applications that are submitted for adjudication to the National Passport Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The National Passport Center processes and adjudicates approximately two million applications each year, or one quarter of all United States passport applications. Operation Checkmate is a joint initiative of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Hampshire, the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General and the Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Enforcement.

JACKSON's sentencing hearing was set by U.S. District Judge Joseph DiClerico for Monday, December 22, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. Assistant U. S. Attorney Al Rubega is prosecuting this case.